



Dinner Seminar Series

## John Mueller

### "The Terrorism Delusion"

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

6 p.m.

Mershon Center for International Security Studies

1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

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*\*Please note that this is a faculty affiliates event. Registration is by invitation only.*

**John Mueller** is senior research scientist and Woody Hayes Chair of National Security Studies Emeritus at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, and professor of political science at The Ohio State University.

Mueller is currently focusing on terrorism and particularly on the reactions (or over-reactions) it often inspires. His recent book, [Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al Qaeda](#) (Oxford University Press, 2010), suggests that atomic terrorism is highly unlikely and that efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation frequently have damaging results. He has also written [Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them](#) (Free Press, 2006). *The New York Times* called the book "important" and "accurate, timely, and necessary." His book, [Terrorism, Security, and Money: Balancing the Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Homeland Security](#) (Oxford University Press, 2011), was written in collaboration with engineer and risk analyst Mark Stewart and applies cost-benefit analysis to issues of homeland security. Another book, [War and Ideas: Selected Essays](#) was published in May 2011 by Routledge. He is also the editor of a set of case studies, [Terrorism Since 9/11: The American Cases](#), published as a web book in 2011 by the Mershon Center.

Mueller is author of a multiple-prize-winning book analyzing public



John Mueller

Woody Hayes Chair of  
National Security Studies  
Emeritus  
Professor of Political  
Science  
The Ohio State University

opinion during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (Wiley, 1973), "a classic" according to the *American Political Science Review*, and winner of the Warren J. Mitofsky Award for Excellence in Public Opinion Research given by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. Mueller's book [\*Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War\*](#) (Basic Books, 1989) deals with changing attitudes toward war. In a front page review in *The Washington Post*, McGeorge Bundy commented, "Mueller makes you think, and his method of argument combines fresh insights with trenchant prose in a way that makes thoughtful reading agreeable."

Mueller has also published [\*Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War\*](#) (University of Chicago Press, 1994) and [\*Quiet Cataclysm: Reflections on the Recent Transformation of World Politics\*](#) (HarperCollins, 1995). His [\*Capitalism, Democracy, and Ralph's Pretty Good Grocery\*](#) was published in 1999 by Princeton University Press. In his review in *The Weekly Standard*, David J. Silver writes, "Mueller's provocative book deserves a wide audience ... Mueller writes sharp, brisk, and witty prose that is unflinching and lucid."

Mueller's book about international and civil wars, [\*The Remnants of War\*](#) (Cornell University Press, 2004), won the Joseph P. Lepgold Prize for Best Book on International Relations from Georgetown University. Writing in *The New Republic*, Gregg Easterbrook called it "brilliantly original and urgent." *Retreat from Doomsday*, *Quiet Cataclysm*, and *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* have recently been [reprinted](#).

Mueller has published scores of articles in scholarly journals such as *International Security*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Interest*, *Security Studies*, *Orbis*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *The National Interest*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Lapham's Quarterly*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *International Interactions*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *International Studies Perspectives*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Issues in Science and Technology*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Review of International Studies*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, and *Foreign Policy*, as well as many editorial page columns and articles in publications like *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Republic*, *ABA Human Rights Magazine*, *The Nation*, *American Conservative*, *Regulation*, *Reason*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Newsday*, *Playboy*, and *The New York Times*.

He has appeared on television on The O'Reilly Factor, [\*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart\*](#), Hannity and Colmes, Nightly Business Report on PBS, The National on CBC, and 20/20 with John Stossel, and on radio on The Michael Medved Show and on NPR's On Point and All Things Considered. He has been a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, the Cato Institute, the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo.

In another field, Mueller is author of [\*Astaire Dancing\*](#) (Knopf, 1985). Before publication, this book won the de la Torre Bueno prize of Dance Perspectives Foundation as the "most distinguished manuscript on dance"; since publication, it has been called "one of the most

satisfying, rich and witty film books ever written" by *Kirkus Reviews*, and "an extraordinary study of film art" by the *The New York Times*. This book has recently be digitally remastered and republished. Mueller also provides the commentary track on the DVD version of the 1936 Astaire-Rogers film, *Swing Time*. He is the director of Ohio State's [Dance Film Archive](#), a set of DVDs, videotapes, and 16mm films that are available for purchase and rental.

Also to Mueller's credit are scripts for two musicals. One, [A Foggy Day](#), combines a P.G. Wodehouse play with songs by George and Ira Gershwin, and co-written by Norm Foster, was produced for the 1998 and 1999 seasons at the Shaw Festival, in Ontario, Canada for over 250 sold out performances. Another, [One For My Baby](#), derives from a Fred Astaire film and makes use of songs with lyrics by Johnny Mercer.

Before coming to Ohio State in 2000, Mueller was on the faculty at the University of Rochester for many years. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has been a John Simon Guggenheim Fellow, and has received grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He has also received several teaching prizes, and in 2009 received the International Studies Association's Susan Strange Award that "recognizes a person whose singular intellect, assertiveness, and insight most challenge conventional wisdom and intellectual and organizational complacency in the international studies community." In 2010, he received The Ohio State University's [Distinguished Scholar Award](#). He was also selected for the [Playboy Honor Roll of 20 Professors Who Are Reinventing the Classroom](#) in October 2010.

### Synopsis

It seems increasingly likely that the reaction to the terrorism attacks of September 11, 2001, has been massively disproportionate to the real threat al-Qaeda has ever actually presented either as an international menace or as an inspiration or model to homegrown amateurs. In result, we have been living a decade of delusion as trillions of dollars have been expended and tens of thousands of lives have been snuffed out in a frantic, ill-conceived effort to react to an event that, however tragic and dramatic in the first instance, should have been seen, at least in the fullness of time, to be of only limited significance (Warning: This talk includes reference to The Wizard of Oz and The Emperor's New Clothes and may not be suitable for all audiences.)

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1501 Neil Ave.

Columbus, OH 43201

Phone: 614.292.1681

Fax: 614.292.2407

Email: [mershoncenter@osu.edu](mailto:mershoncenter@osu.edu)